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UNCLAS DHAKA 005594

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [KISL](#) [PGOV](#) [BG](#) [BG](#)

SUBJECT: ASSASSINATION OF TWO JUDGES SPARKS COURT
PROTESTS

11. (SBU) Summary: An IED thrown at a court commuter van killed two judges and injured four others in southern Bangladesh. Home State Minister Babar speculated to reporters that Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), the alleged perpetrator of the August 17 and October 3 bomb blasts, was behind the attack. District judges across the country subsequently walked out of court in protest and threatened a "greater movement" if the BDG fails to ensure security for judges by November 21. End Summary

12. (SBU) On November 14, assailants hurled an IED at a van carrying judges from their residential quarters in Jhalakhati, about 200 miles south of Dhaka, to the local district court, according to press and other reports. Senior Assistant Judges Sohail Ahmed and Jagannath Pery were killed and several other persons were injured, including a suspected attacker named Mamun. Local people reportedly detained Mamun, who, according to some reports, unsuccessfully tried to explode another bomb from his pocket on way to hospital in Barisal. BDG officials and media reports said Mamun carried leaflets from Jamaatul Mujahidin Bangladesh (JMB) calling for the implementation of Islamic law. Police subsequently raided Mamun's house in northern Rajshahi district and found a large number of JMB leaflets, and detained another suspect from Jhalakhati.

13. (SBU) District judges across the country walked out of court to protest the attack, the fourth of its kind since the 17 August serial blasts that rocked all but one of Bangladesh's 64 districts. Leaders of the Judicial Service Association expressed grave concern at the insecurity of judges in the face of JMB threats and attacks. They threatened "a greater movement" if the BDG fails to ensure their security by November 21. The Supreme Court Bar Association in Dhaka also called for measures to ensure security for judges and lawyers. The lawyers boycotted Supreme Court hearings this afternoon and announced another boycott for November 17.

14. (SBU) Babar, Law Minister Ahmed, and the chiefs of the police and the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) visited Jhalakhati and consoled the families of the victims. Babar told reporters that JMB was using the name of Islam to carry out activities not approved by Islam. Ahmed said perpetrators of violence are enemies of Bangladesh whose objective is to destabilize the country.

15. (SBU) The Jhalakhati incident occurred one day after the heads of government of the seven South Asian countries that comprise SAARC promised at their Dhaka summit to bolster counter-terrorism cooperation. Judges and court premises featured prominently in the August 17 and October 3 bomb blasts. On November 8, police had reportedly recovered 13 locally made bombs from an abandoned building in Jhalakhati, a hub of ultra Maoists, and arrested three persons for interrogation.

CHAMMAS